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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**PUBLIC INVITED TO COMMENT ON SHRIMP FISHERY MANAGEMENT**

**BRUNSWICK, GA, April 18, 2005** -- Boiled, fried, or dangling on a hook, shrimp are an integral part of the coastal Georgia lifestyle. However, those who pursue this tasty crustacean for fun or profit often find themselves frustrated. Low dockside shrimp prices, and other problems plague those who operate the large trawlers. Inconsistent actions in local court systems have created confusion about the use of cast nets. As coastal development increases, more conflicts arise between dock owners and bait shrimp harvesters who trawl in small tidal creeks. There are many different opinions about how the shrimp fishery should be regulated by state and federal government.

This summer, the Coastal Resources Division (CRD) of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources will be working with the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government to bring the public into a process designed to reduce conflicts and improve shrimp fishery management. First will be two town hall meetings during which the public is invited to attend and comment on shrimp fishery management issues. Then a stakeholder group of representatives from each sector of the shrimp fishery will work over the summer to address these issues and provide recommendations on how laws, regulations, and policies should be changed.

Spud Woodward, CRD Assistant Director for Marine Fisheries comments, "We are expected to make decisions that balance the long-term health of Georgia's living marine resources and their habitats with the needs and desires of the public. It is impossible to do this without the help of the very public who is affected by those decisions. We hope to have good attendance at the town hall meetings and enthusiastic participation during the stakeholder process. If we do, I'm optimistic that we can identify some actions that will help bring Georgia's shrimp fishery management into the 21<sup>st</sup> century."

The town hall meetings are scheduled for Tuesday, May 3 at the Stellar Conference Center-Quality Inn in Brunswick (I-95, Exit 38) and on Wednesday, May 4 at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Pooler (I-95, exit 102). Each public meeting will begin at 6:30 PM.

If you are unable to attend either of the public meetings, CRD has posted an informal survey on shrimp fishery management on its website. Responses to this survey will be considered equally with other written and verbal comments. Simply go to <http://crd.dnr.state.ga.us/> and click in the quick links section. Hearing impaired individuals requiring special assistance at the meetings, anyone requiring detailed driving directions or having questions should contact Doug Haymans at (912) 264-7218 or [doug\\_haymans@dnr.state.ga.us](mailto:doug_haymans@dnr.state.ga.us).

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## DNR, fishery reps aim for shrimp solution

By JACK MORSE  
The Brunswick News

Rather than tell shrimpers and other fishery-related individuals to touch gloves and come out fighting, the Department of Natural Resources decided on a different tactic to try to resolve differences that have arisen within the fishing industry.

On Tuesday, the DNR's Coastal Resources Division held its fourth meeting of its Shrimp Fishery Stakeholder Panel, a group of fishery representatives who are to work toward positive solutions to issues ranging from modifying cast nets to intermingling with lot trailers.

"There are a few things the group has reached an absolute consensus on," said Spud Woodward, assistant marine fisheries director for the DNR's Coastal Resources Division, toward the end of the meeting.

But the somewhat slow progress, he said, is to be expected.



Frank Sheffield, left, a commercial cast-netter from Camden County, and other members of the Shrimp Fishery Stakeholder Panel listen during a meeting Tuesday at the Stellar Conference Center in west Glynn County.

ed, given the array of fishery factions — from the live bait fishery and cast-netters to trawlers and fixed shrimp — represented at the meeting.

To help facilitate the process, the DNR called in representa-

tives from the Fanning Institute, a University of Georgia organization designed to assist community groups with economic growth, leadership and other development aspects.

So far, meetings — including

the one Tuesday at the Stellar Conference Center in west Glynn County — have been going as well as can be expected, said George Dick, head of the Institute's community and economic development pro-

gram. "I wouldn't really say they've bonded," he said. "But they've really grown to respect each other's opinions. There has been a lot of give and take."

Frank Sheffield, a commercial cast-netter from Camden County who is on the stakeholder panel, also said he has been pleased with the process.

"It's gone fairly well," he said. "You've got different factions and each person is trying to progress their part of the industry. Anytime we can agree on a point, it's a step forward."

The panel is using discussion during the meetings to reach agreements, through voting, on the best course of action that lawmakers can take on issues affecting the industry. One more meeting will be in September, and then two more meetings, open to the public, will be held after that one.

The DNR will then take the suggested options to state lawmakers.

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## **PUBLIC INVITED TO HEAR SHRIMP PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS**

**BRUNSWICK, GA, September 15, 2005** – The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and UGA Fanning Institute invite interested parties to hear and comment on the recommendations of the Georgia Shrimp Fishery Stakeholder Panel. This group of volunteers has spent the summer taking a comprehensive look at how the state's shrimp fishery is regulated. The public meetings are scheduled for September 26 in Pooler and September 27 in Brunswick.

During the summer, the panel, which included representatives from the various sectors of the shrimp fishery, recreational anglers, and fishing guides, met five times. Their all-day discussions were sometimes contentious, but always productive. "I've worked with many groups over my career, and I'm very impressed with how passionate this group is about shrimp fishing. They came to these meetings at their own expense and engaged themselves fully in the process," commented the Fanning Institute's George Dick.

At its final meeting on September 13, the panel summarized its discussions and debates in the form of several recommendations to DNR. Some of these include a repeal on the prohibition of modified cast nets, development of a cast-net stamp for recreational harvesters, a permanent closure of the estuaries to food-shrimp trawling, and allowing cast nets for the commercial harvest of live bait shrimp.

Spud Woodward, assistant director for marine fisheries with the Coastal Resources Division, explains why the public should attend these meetings. "The stakeholder panel has been a great sounding board, and we owe them a debt of gratitude. Now it's time to give the public a chance to tell us what they think about the panel's recommendations. Once we get that input, the leadership of the department will develop an action plan that will result in changes to the way Georgia's shrimp fishery is regulated."

The meetings will be held at 6:30 p.m. Monday, September 26, at the Mighty 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Museum in Pooler (I-95, exit 102), and 6.30 p.m. Tuesday, September 27, at the Stellar Conference Center-Quality Inn in Brunswick (I-95, Exit 38). If you're unable to attend, you can comment on the shrimp-panel recommendations on the Coastal Resources Division web site. Responses to this survey will be considered equally with other written and verbal comments. Simply go to <http://crd.dnr.state.ga.us/> and click in the quick links section. Hearing-impaired individuals requiring special assistance at the meetings or anyone having questions should contact Doug Haymans at (912) 264-7218 or [doug\\_haymans@dnr.state.ga.us](mailto:doug_haymans@dnr.state.ga.us).

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